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Crime Kingpin Arrested After Police Shootout

By The Moscow Times

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A reputed crime boss has been arrested after a fatal shootout with police in the center of Moscow, a law enforcement official said Friday.

The shootout took place late Thursday evening after police were called to the scene of a suspected burglary in an apartment on Komsomolsky Prospekt, the unidentified official said.

"There were four criminals. They began armed resistance against police responding to a callout, as a result of which one of the bandits was killed and three detained," he said.

One of those detained was Georgian-born Rezo Bukhnikashvili, alias "Petso." Bukhnikashvili holds the title of "thief-in-law," an underworld distinction from Soviet times bestowed on top crime bosses.

Mobster gun battles and contract killings were common in Russia in the 1990s, but still

occasionally occur today. In January, a sniper assassinated reputed crime boss Aslan Usoyan in broad daylight in downtown Moscow.

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